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ATCHI.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Prince of Wales Theatre, London, Sept. 21st, 1868.

LORD ADONIS FICKLETON	Mr. H. J. Montague. / Mr. H. W. Montgomery.
SIR MARTIN MAYDUKE	Mr. Blakeley.
LARKINS (*Valet to Lord Adonis*)	Mr. Hill.
LADY MAYDUKE	Miss Carlotta Addison.
EMILY HARGRAVE	Miss Augusta Wilton.

PERIOD, 1780.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION—40 MINUTES.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

SIR MARTIN MAYDUKE, an enthusiastic amateur botanist and inventor of a wonderful snuff, *siflox nasum pungens*, is visited by LORD ADONIS FICKLETON, whose name suggests his character, who pays court to EMILY HARGRAVE, the baronet's sister-in-law. LADY MAYDUKE, having learned of FICKLETON'S volatility, opposes his pretensions and tries to get rid of him, being resolved that he shall not trifle with her sister's affections. This results in the wager of a silver snuff box between the two, the lady wagering that he shall willingly leave the premises before the day is over, FICKLETON insisting that he will remain to secure his end. Then follows a series of moves in which each endeavors to outwit the other. LADY MAYDUKE arouses the comical jealousy of her husband, hoping thus that he will send his lordship away, FICKLETON assisting the situation in order that SIR MARTIN will remain close by his wife and thus allow ADONIS greater freedom in paying his respects to EMILY. This gives rise to a succession of absurd complications in the course of which EMILY believes that her sister has succumbed to his lordship's blandishments, and SIR MARTIN furiously challenges the intruder to mortal combat, the confusion being heightened by FICKLETON'S valet who helps to swell the fun of the piece by his clumsiness. When it seems as though FICKLETON had won the wager, LADY MAYDUKE, feeling that she has the one resource of ridicule left, sends

him the forfeit agreed upon, having first filled it with her husband's wonderful snuff, as a pretended acknowledgement of defeat. FICKLETON now presses his suit upon EMILY, but, having mechanically taken a pinch of the famous snuff, finds his lovemaking turned into broad burlesque by a succession of inopportune sneezes in the midst of his tenderest passages, the others appearing in the meantime, to witness his discomfiture. Seeing himself thus outwitted, FICKLETON contrives to make LADY MAYDUKE take a pinch of the snuff, she passing it on to her sister, and SIR MARTIN sneezing his head nearly off meanwhile. In the confusion of a general and irresistable paroxysm of sneezing, the complications are straightened out, and FICKLETON, proving in earnest for once in his life, secures the heart and hand of the fair EMILY amidst a chorus of Atchis!

COSTUMES.

SIR M. MAYDUKE.—Plum-coloured square-cut coat, canary-coloured waistcoat and breeches, top boots.

LORD ADONIS.—Marone velvet coat, light vest, silver grey satin breeches, shoes and buckles.

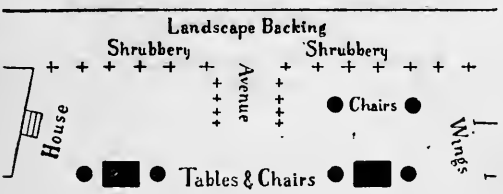
LADY MAYDUKE.—Pink satin.

EMILY.—Blue satin.

LARKINS.—Livery.

(The costumes may, with propriety, be entirely modern.)

STAGE SETTING.



SCENE.—The Garden adjacent to SIR MARTIN'S country house, tastefully laid out in 3 G.; landscape backing in 4 G. Shubberies and flower beds up R. and L., in the centre of which is an avenue of shrubs. Set house up R., with entrance R. U. E. All other entrances open. Rustic tables and chairs R. C. and L. C. Two rustic chairs up L. Grass cloth down. (N. B. If desired, a plain interior with entrances R., L., and C., can be substituted with propriety.)

PROPERTIES.

Furniture as per scene-plot. Embroidery, letter and gloves for LADY MAYDUKE. Watering pot for EMILY. Bundle of weeds, small digging-fork, morocco case containing snuff-box, gloves, eyeglass and nosegay for FICKLETON. Small basket filled with botonical specimens, small hoe, 2 horse-pistols and 2 large swords for SIR MARTIN. Letter and money for LARKINS.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The player is supposed to face the audience. R. means right; L., left; C., center; R. C., right of centre; L. C., left of centre; 1 E., first entrance; 2 E., second entrance; U. E., upper entrance, or one nearest the back; 1, 2 or 3 G., first, second or third grooves; UP STAGE, toward the back; DOWN STAGE, toward the foot-lights.

R. R. C. C. L. C. L.

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ATCHI.

Scene.—SIR MARTIN MAYDUKE'S *country house. A garden tastefully laid out—shrubberies at back, in the* C. *of which is an avenue. Part of* SIR MARTIN'S *house is seen at back* R. *Rustic table, and garden chairs in various parts of the stage.* LADY MAYDUKE *seated* R. *of* R. *table, employed with embroidery.* EMILY *at back watering flowers with small watering pot.*

Emily. (*looking off*) Oh, Mary, I see him—he's coming.

Lady M. Who?

Emily. That dear, fat, rosy-faced, good-tempered, handsome, husband of yours, Sir Martin.

Lady M. And pray is it on account of my "dear, fat, rosy-faced husband," that you are putting yourself into such a state of excitement? If so, I shall be jealous. Is Sir Martin alone?

Emily. Yes, I mean—no, that is—I thought I saw—not that I looked——

Lady M. Exactly; you didn't *look*, and yet you *saw* that my husband was *not* alone.

Emily. I didn't say anything of the sort. I was only going to observe that—there was somebody with him.

Lady M. Oh, that's quite a different thing, and I apologize—ha, ha! and who is Sir Martin's companion?

Emily. (*hesitating*) How can I tell, they are so far off?

Lady M. What of that? no distance can be too great for such eyes as yours, that can see without looking—ha, ha!

Emily. Then I think that Sir Martin's companion is——

Lady M. The handsome, highly perfumed, and superlatively dressed, Lord Adonis Fickleton, adored by women without hearts, envied by men without brains, the leader of fashion, the focus of scandal, colonel of a regiment that has never seen service, master of hounds that have never seen a fox, owner of a yacht that has never seen salt water, and that's all—that's all!

Emily. (*pouting*) Lord Adonis, I am perfectly well aware is no favourite of yours, but remember, sister, I have had no experience of fashionable society beyond our county ball at Rugby; and, therefore, can form no comparison between Lord Adonis Fickle-

ton and others of his class. I confess I think him very agreeable —very well bred——

Lady M. Oh, yes, the animal's breed is unquestionable.

Emily. And as for good nature, you'll allow he must have an ample stock, or would he go out botanizing every day with Sir Martin, pulling up nasty weeds, digging up dirty roots?

Lady M. At the risk of soiling his lily-white fingers, ha, ha!

Emily. Well, as his lordship came down to Fickleton Hall for one day only, and has remained a whole fortnight, botany must have some attractions for him.

Lady M. No doubt. Who knows but he may have discovered some pretty wild, uncultivated flower, which he wishes to remove from it's present obscurity, and transplant to a richer and more luxuriant soil. (*with intention.*)

Sir M. (*without* L. U. E.) Now then, my lord, jump over the ditch ; if you stick in the middle you won't hurt, the mud's nice and soft.

Lady M. Here they come. Run, Emily, and see that luncheon is ready, (*rising*) and mind it's a good substantial one, for though Lord Fickleton only nibbles, my husband eats.

(EMILY *runs into house* R. U. E.)

Lady M. So, my Lord Viscount Fickleton, you think, like Cæsar, you have but to come, see, and conquer. Your insipid gallantries may bewilder poor Emily's head, but they shall never reach her heart—no, I claim an elder sister's right to defend that citadel, my lord, and with no weapons but a sister's love and a woman's wit, I will compel you to raise the siege, depend upon it.

(Exit L. I E.)

Enter SIR MARTIN, L. U. E., *dressed in the costume of a country gentleman. He carries a small basket, in which are plants, weeds, &c., a small hoe in his hand. He is followed by* LORD FICKLETON, *dragging a quantity of weeds after him with one hand, and carrying a large three-pronged fork in the other. He drops into the first chair he comes to.*

Sir M. Ha, ha! why, my lord, you look what we call regularly done up.

Lord F. If the term "regularly done up," means thoroughly knocked up, it is singularly applicable to my present physical prostration.

Sir M. Why, we haven't walked more than five miles.

Lord F. Perhaps not ; but when one is encumbered with a colossal implement of agriculture like my friend here, (*showing the fork*) five miles appear fifty.

Sir M. Ha, ha! I say, my lord, I hope you've got all my beautiful specimens quite safe.

Lord F. Oh, yes, here they are. I've been dragging at least

a ton weight of them after me for the last hour and a half. By-the-by, friend Martin, the next time we go out botanizing together we'll hire a horse and cart, and I'll drive.

Sir M. Ha, ha! botany is a beautiful study. Look here, this basket's full of common nettles; now, 'tisn't everybody knows that there are two sorts of nettles—nettles that sting, and nettles that do not sting, for instance, those do not sting. (*taking out a handful of nettles*) Oh, damn it, don't they! (*flinging nettles, away and rubbing his hands.*)

Lord F. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir M. Here, John, John!

Enter SERVANT *from house*, R.

Help me to carry these confounded things into the laboratory. I'll soon be back, my lord, and help you to demolish the luncheon. Confound the nettles.

Exit *into house*, R. JOHN *gathers up weeds, garden implements, &c., and follows* SIR MARTIN *into house*, R.

Lord F. (*seated* L. *of* R. *table*) A plague on botanists in general, and friend Martin in particular. I've allowed him to make a victim of me by trotting me out with him every morning for a whole fortnight in order that I might have free access to his house and the society of his charming sister-in-law, the fascinating Emily Hargrave. Really, there is an artless innocence, a rustic simplicity about the dear creature that is absolutely attractive. Yes, I positively must add her to the already somewhat extensive list of my triumphs; and, when I have gained her youthful affections, I shall—I shall consider what on earth I shall do with them. (*rises*) I wonder where she is this morning. (*looking off* R.) She is generally down by yonder bed of flowers—tulips, I think she called them—no, not tulips, wallflowers—no, sunflowers—no, cauliflowers—no—(*still looking* R.)

Enter LADY MAYDUKE, L. I. E.

Lady M. (*observing him*) So, so, on the watch, I see. (*approaching him*) Good morning, my lord.

Lord F. Ah, charming Miss Har—I mean my dear Lady Mayduke. (*aside*) Her elder sister, a sort of dragon in petticoats.

Lady M. But I ought to apologise, you were doubtless expecting some one else.

Lord F. (R. C.) No, not I, I assure you.

Lady M. (*smiling*) Indeed—are you quite sure?

Lord F. (L. C.) If you do not believe me, I am ready to declare most emphatically——

Lady M. Don't do that, or I certainly shall *not* believe you.

Lord F. (*forcing a laugh*) Ha, ha! you are pleased to be facetious. (*aside*) She insults me grossly.

Lady M. My lord, let us understand each other—I am no longer your dupe.

Lord F. (*starts*) Madam!

Lady M. Nay, I beg you will hear me out, while I tell you by what means I have been enabled to form a more correct estimate of your character. This letter (*producing letter*) is from a very dear and valued friend of mine, Lady Mary Martindale; I believe you know her.

Lord F. Yes, that is by reputation.

Lady M. That is precisely what she professes to know of you, for she says (*reading*) "You tell me you have made the acquaintance of Lord Adonis Fickleton. If report does his lordship justice, you could not easily have found a more agreeable companion—"

Lord F. Her ladyship flatters me. (*bowing.*)

Lady M. Wait a little. (*reading again*) "Or a more insincere man—in a word his sole ambition in life has apparently been to acquire the not very creditable character of a male coquette, whose flirtations have only been exceeded in their number by their heartlessness." Shall I go on?

Lord F. Certainly, unless the lady's description of me alarms you. (*conceitedly.*)

Lady M. On my own account? Not the least little bit in the world, but I have a sister.

Lord F. Surely, Lady Mayduke, you cannot for one moment imagine——

Lady M. That you love her? oh, dear no; that you wish her to love *you?* yes! and therefore, my lord, I am candid enough to tell you that your absence from Mayduke Hall would not be considered a positive calamity by its mistress. (*with a low curtsey.*)

Lord F. A civil way of showing me the door. (*smiling*) And what if I were dull enough not to take the hint?

Lady M. That, my lord, would at once amount to a declaration of war between us; and, depend upon it, you would find me a most determined and indefatigable enemy.

Lord F. While I am only striving to show myself a zealous and sincere friend.

Lady M. (*smiling*) Indeed! How so?

Lord F. By endeavoring to accomplish your slightest wish. (*taking a small morocco case from his pocket*) The day before yesterday you were pleased to admire my snuff box, and regretted that you were not within reach of town in order to purchase a similar one to present to your husband on his birthday—this *is* his birthday, and here (*opening case and showing a jewelled snuff box*) is the snuff box. (*presenting it to* LADY MAYDUKE.)

Lady M. This is indeed most attentive of you, my lord, and only makes me the more solicitous that you should no longer waste your valuable time here, but return at once to the scene of your former triumphs, where, doubtless, fresh conquests await you.

Lord F. What! leave my botanical studies! run away from school! no, no.

Lady M. (*nettled*) Your voice is then for war!

Lord F. (*bowing*) I cannot resist the honor of having you for an antagonist.

Lady M. Be it so. Before the day is past you shall consider yourself beaten.

Lord F. (*conceitedly*) I will wager to the contrary.

Lady M. Indeed! then this snuff box shall be yours if I fail in compelling you to beat a retreat.

Lord F. And if you succeed, I place in your fair hands an unlimited order on my jeweller.

Lady M. Then hostilities at once begin—there lies my gage. (*throwing down her glove.*)

Lord. F. There mine. (*throwing down his glove.*)

Lady M. And may the best man win. (exit L. I E.)

Lord F. Ha! ha! now really there is something positively exciting about this, it beats botany hollow. I might have been prevailed upon to abandon my contemplated flirtation with the charming Emily, had I been touchingly and pathetically appealed to, but I won't be *bullied* out of it—no, no; now let me see, my first move is obviously to divert the enemy's attention—in short, to occupy my Lady Mayduke with her own affairs instead of mine. But how? Let me think. (*walking to and fro.*)

Enter LARKINS, C. *from* L.

Larkins. I beg pardon,my lud. (LORD ADONIS *keeps walking to and fro*) I repeat, I beg pardon, my lud.

Lord F. (R.) What the devil do you want?

Larkins. (L.) To unload my bosom. After a severe struggle which has lacerated my feelings considerable, I find myself obleeged to give your lordship warning.

Lord F. Warning, and pray why?

Larkins. That's the p'int I'm a coming to, my lud. Sir Martin has promised his housekeeper, Mrs. 'Opkins something 'andsome in the way of a wedding portion whenever she is led to *y*menial haltar, but when he hears that she has selected me for her *u*sband, and I am still in your ludship's service, I'm afraid he'll halter his mind.

Lord F. Why?

Larkins. Because, my lud, it can't be very long afore Sir Martin makes the unpleasant diskivery that your ludship is in love with his wife.

Lord F. In love with Lady Mayduke! what has put that stupid idea into your still more stupid head?

Larkins. The hobservation of my own heyes and the lady herself. Not two minutes ago she said to me "Larkins, these ten guineas is yours if you'll give me the names of those ladies for whom your master has professed an attachment since you have been in his service."

Lord F. Well?

Larkins. Well, here are the ten guineas. (*showing money.*)

Lord F. So, the enemy has lost no time in making her first move—I must endeavor to defeat it.

Sir M. (*without*) Now, my lord, are you coming to luncheon or are you not?

Lord F. (*aside*) Ah, I see my plan—yes. (*aloud*) Larkins!

Larkins. My lud?

Lord F. This way. (*beckons* LARKINS L. *side of stage, then with a loud voice, yet in a mysterious manner, as he sees* SIR MARTIN *entering from house* R. U. E.) Larkins, you have discovered my secret, and must assist me in deceiving Sir Martin.

Sir M. (*as he enters overhearing*) What's that? (*stopping*)

Lord F. He must never suspect the overwhelming, the devouring passion I feel for the lovely Lady Mayduke.

Sir M. (*aside*) Here's a precious discovery!

Lord F. A passion to which I have every reason to believe her ladyship is not insensible.

Sir M. (*aside*) The devil she isn't?

Lord F. Therefore he must be kept in the dark for his own sake, because if he were to make the discovery, he would certainly challenge me, and I should as certainly run him through the body.

Sir M. (*aside*) The murderous villain.

Lord F. Which I need not say would be very painful to me.

Sir M. (*aside*) And not particularly pleasant for *me.*

Lord F. Consequently, he must be kept as much as possible apart from his wife.

Sir M. Must I? then I'll stick to her like her shadow. (LORD ADONIS *turns and feigns astonishment at seeing* SIR MARTIN.)

Lord F. Ah, is that you, my dear friend?

Sir M. (*aside*) He calls me his dear friend, the villain.

Lord F. I'm sorry I shall not be able to accompany you on your botanical expedition this afternoon.

Sir M. What a pity. (*aside*) The ruffian.

Lord F. But Larkins will be proud to supply my place. (LARKINS *bows to* SIR MARTIN.)

Sir M. (*aside*) Will he? that's all you know about it. (*aloud*) I mean to stop at home myself; the fact is, I don't feel very well.

Lord F. (*using his eye glass*) You look bilious.

Larkins. Looks like jaundice.

Lord F. Retire, Larkins. I dine with Sir Martin—indeed, I spend the day with Sir Martin, don't I, Sir Martin?

(exit LARKINS C. *and* L.)

Sir M. (*with a grimace*) Y-es. (*aside*) And a double distilled ass Sir Martin was to invite you.

Lord F. Ah, here come the ladies. How charming Lady Mayduke looks. Really, friend Martin, I positively envy you.

Sir M. (*aside*) Damn his impudence!

LADY MAYDUKE *and* EMILY enter L. 1 E.—LORD ADONIS *advances to meet them, when* SIR MARTIN *suddenly passes her over to the other side of him.*

(*aside*) Ha, ha! I had him there.

Lady M. (*surprised*) Why, what is the matter, my dear?

Sir M. (*with pretended indifference*) Nothing particular, my love, I'm a little warm, that's all—wheugh!

Lord F. The fact is, friend Martin is absolutely craving for his luncheon.

Emily. (*to* SIR MARTIN) Are you? then I am happy to relieve your suffering by announcing the joyful tidings that it is quite ready.

Lord F. (*in an undertone to* EMILY) Oh, that you would take equal compassion on *my* sufferings. (EMILY *turns up stage with* LORD ADONIS.)

Lady M. (*observing them*) They must not be alone. (*leaving* SIR MARTIN'S *arm, and about to follow them.*)

Sir M. (*stopping her*) Where are you going?

Lady M. (*impatiently*) To take a seat and finish my embroidery, that's all.

Sir M. Then why not take a seat and finish it here? You'll find it nice and cool in the sun—I mean nice and hot in the shade. (*aside*) I don't know what I'm talking about. (*sits in chair* R. LADY MAYDUKE *hastily goes up stage and joins* EMILY *and* LORD ADONIS. SIR MARTIN *turns and sees* LADY MAYDUKE, *trots up stage after her, and takes her arm again—the four then advance to front.*)*

Lady M. (*anxiously to* LORD ADONIS) You were observing to my sister——

Lord F. A few very commonplace remarks respecting a private theatrical performance about to be given by the Duchess of Twaddleton.

Lady M. True; the play, I believe, is the "Barber of Seville," and you, my lord, are doubtless selected to enact the enamoured lover, Count Almariva.

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* SIR MARTIN. R. LADY MAYDUKE. R. C. LORD ADONIS. L. C. EMILY. L.

Lord F. No, they had the impertinence to cast me for one of the servants—I forget his name—the fellow who is always sneezing. (*imitating*) Atchi!

Sir M. Ecod, if you'll only play the part, I'll give you some of my famous sneezing powder—some of my "siflox nasum pungens." One sniff and you'll sneeze for a month.

Lord F. You're very kind, but it is not probable that I shall make myself so superlatively ridiculous.

Emily. Ha! ha! it certainly would have a very absurd effect. (*imitating*) Atchi! Atchi! I cannot conceive any man in a more absurd situation. (*imitating again*) Atchi! ha, ha!

Lady M. And yet my lord, there are some ladies I could mention, who, I fancy, would enjoy such an exhibition amazingly. I allude to those who have been the objects of your lordship's numerous flirtations. (*significantly, and looking at* EMILY.)

Emily. (*aside*) Flirtations! What's that I hear?

Lady M. And who, each in her turn, have been somewhat unceremoniously supplanted by a more attractive rival.

Emily. (*aside*) Can it be possible!

Lord F. (*annoyed, and looking anxiously at* EMILY, *who appears indignant*) I assure your ladyship you are quite mistaken.

Lady M. Not I, indeed; for instance, you cannot deny your open admiration for the Countess of Rosedale. No, I beg your pardon, Mrs. Griffin, the wealthy hop merchant's wife, was the first—then came the countess, who, in her turn, was supplanted by Mad'lle. Zepherine, the celebrated ballet dancer, who, in a few weeks herself made way for the youthful widow of General O'Slasher; then came the lovely wife of the Spanish Ambassador —no I'm wrong again—she came after the Duchess of Roehampton; yes, then followed——

Lord F. (*quickly*) A libel—a vile libel, I assure you (*aside*) that scoundrel Larkins ain't omitted one. I'll kill him.

Sir M. (*aside*) The fellow's a regular Bashaw.

Lord F. (*to* EMILY) You, at least, Miss Hargrave, will not credit this most abominable calumny. (*aside*) I'll kill Larkins.

Emily. (*piqued*) What can it possibly signify to me, sir? (*aside*) What a dreadful man.

Lord F. (*to* LADY M.) Once more, I assure you——

Emily. (*with affected indifference*) Really sister, had we not better change the conversation, it may amuse *you*, but it is really remarkably insipid and uninteresting to others. (*pointedly.*)

Sir M. (*aside*) If Lady Mayduke cared one atom about the man, would she roast the man in this unmerciful way? Of course not, and yet——

Enter SERVANT *from house*, R. U. E.

Servant. Luncheon is served.

Lord F. Will Miss Hargrave permit me——(*offering arm.*)

Emily. (*coldly*) I am not hungry, and shall remain here. (*sits* L.)

Lord F. How very singular. I haven't an atom of appetite myself, and will keep you company. (*sits* L. C.)

Lady M. (*quickly*) This musn't be. Strange to say, I can't touch a morsel; so we'll all three stop where we are. (*sits*, R. C.)

Sir M. (*aside*) I'm ravenous; but I won't budge. (*aloud*) How very odd, my appetite's gone too, vanished all of a sudden. (*aside*) I could eat one of my own coach horses, harness and all, (*aloud*) so we'll all *four* of us stop where we are. (*sits* R.)

Lord F. (*rising*) I suddenly remember I have a few orders to give to Larkins. Will you excuse me? (*going* C.)

Sir M. (*eagerly*) By all means. (*aside*) He's going. I shall be able to have a snack after all.

Lord F. I shall soon return.

Sir M. Don't hurry yourself, my lord.

Lord F. (*bows to* LADY M., *aside*) I confess to having met with rather a severe check from my fair enemy, but she shall find I'm not defeated yet—now I'll go and kill Larkins. (**exit,** L. U. E.)

Sir M. (*rises and crosses to* C., *quickly*) How very odd. I think my appetite's coming back again.

Lady M. Why my dear, the luncheon must be cleared away by this time.

Sir M. The devil it is. (*runs off at the top of his speed into house*, R. U. E.)

Emily. (*rises, aside*) And I was silly enough to be flattered by his attentions—never mind, I'll show a proper spirit—I'll lock myself up in my room, and have a good cry. (*runs off after* SIR MARTIN, R. U. E.)

Lady M. Victory, victory! I have now nothing to fear, my Lord Viscount Fickleton, from your attentions to my sister. Ha, ha, poor Emily, how her eyes sparkled with indignation as I detailed the gentleman's numerous flirtations. (*seeing* LARKINS, *who enters with a letter*, L. U. E.) Ah, his valet. (*to* LARKINS) Your master is not here. You have a letter I perceive—for my husband, I presume.

Larkins. No, my lady, it is not often that my lud's letters are intended to be seen by 'usband's eyes. (*knowingly, then looking about him, and in a mysterious manner*) It is for your ladyship's sister, Miss Emily 'Argrave.

Lady M. (*aside*) So, so, a last and desperate effort on the part of the enemy. (*aloud*) I will give Miss Hargrave the letter.

Re-enter SIR MARTIN *hastily from house*, R. U. E., *in the act of eating and swallowing.*

Sir M. (*almost choking*) Confound it, I've eaten so fast, I've been within an inch of choking myself half a dozen times. (*seeing*

LADY M. *and* LARKINS) Heyday, Lady Mayduke with his lordship's valet.

Lady M. (*to* LARKINS) Well, Mr. Larkins, am I to have his lordship's letter or not?

Sir. M. (*overhearing*) A letter!

Larkins. Well my lady, since you insist on it. (*presents letter to* LADY M., SIR M. *snatches it.*)

Sir. M. Ah, ah! (*tearing the letter open.*)

Larkins. The devil! (*runs out* L. U. E.)

Lady M. (*very quickly*) What is the matter, dear?

Sir. M. Don't dear me—matter? This letter madam! (*showing letter.*)

Lady M. (*reproachfully*) Was intended for *me*, Sir Martin.

Sir M. You confess it. She confesses it.

Lady M. Be calm, my dear.

Sir M. For the second time, don't dear me. Calm! When you see I'm almost choking with ox tail soup—I mean indignation.

Emily *runs on from house*, R. U. E.

Emily. (*alarmed*) What is the matter? Why, I declare, brother-in-law, you're quite red in the face.

Sir M. You'd be red in the face too, if you'd just made such a lunch—I mean such a discovery—as I have.

Emily. What do you mean?

Sir M. This, (*crosses to* C., *very emphatically*)that when we see a thoughtless, imprudent woman,(*significantly looking at* LADY M.) standing on the edge of a stupendous precipice—when we know that one step more, and over she goes——

Lady M. (R.) Ah, ah!

Emily.(L. *aside*) Can he be alluding to me? (*aloud*) Well, what next?

Sir M. What next? Why, of course it's our duty to save her because we know that if—I say if—in short if—over she goes, it's all up with her—no, I mean down with her—no! up with her.

Lady M. Ha, ha, ha! Very poetically expressed, indeed.

Sir M. But perhaps not sufficiently intelligible—in a word then, (*with another emphatic look at* LADY M.) Lord Fickleton is the stupendous precipice, (EMILY *starts*) he has dared to cast glances at a certain thoughtless and imprudent woman, (EMILY *again starts*) who, fascinated by his brilliant exterior, without looking into his interior—(*still pointedly, looking at* LADY M.)

Emily. (*quickly*) No, no; you are mistaken.

Sir M. Of course, it's only natural that you should wish to screen her.

Emily. (*nettled*) Screen her! Allow me to observe, Sir Martin Mayduke, that I do not see the slightest necessity for your interfering in the matter at all, there.

Sir M. The deuce you don't, ha, ha! so then, when I intercept a letter, a love letter from Lord Fickleton to my wife—(*flourishing letter.*)

Emily. Oh, impossible.

Lady M. (*anxiously to* SIR M.) Surely you're not going to read the letter before Emily?

Sir M. I beg your pardon, I am.

Lady M. Aloud?

Sir M. Very much aloud! (*reads*) "Oh madam," you see the scoundrel mentions no name, (*reading*) "I frankly admit the folly and impropriety of my past conduct," his *past* conduct, of course, the villain doesn't see any impropriety in his *present* conduct. Oh dear, no, (*reading again*) "deign then, most adorable of women, to restore a sincere penitent to the paths of virtue and innocence." Virtue and innocence—the humbug.

Emily. (*aside, and with evident pleasure*) I'm convinced the letter was intended for me.

Lady M. (*aside, and observing her*) The letter has had the effect I dreaded.

Emily. Are you quite sure that that letter was meant for Mary?

Sir M. Well, considering that I intercepted it at the very moment that——

Emily. Well, but——

Sir M. I repeat at the very moment that——(SIR M. *and* EMILY *go up* C., *talking in an excited manner.*)

Lady M. (*aside*) Well played, Lord Fickleton, a good move, but not necessarily a winning one.

Emily. (L. *coming down with* SIR M.) Yes, my poor dear jealous brother-in-law, *I* am the object of Lord Fickleton's admiration, not Mary.

Lady M. Hold Emily, (*crosses to* C.) I will not accept your generous sacrifice. In a word, Sir Martin, (*with pretended embarassment*) I confess that Lord Fickleton has expressed himself to me, in terms which—which——

Emily. Mary!

Sir M. (R.) Let her go on, let her go on. Well, in terms, which——

Lady M. Convince me that I am the object of his lordship's most unhappy, most unpardonable attachment!

Emily. The monster!

Sir M. (*rise, to* EMILY) Thank you. (*then to* LADY M.) And you can stand there and tell me this, not only with the calmness of a stoic, but with the coolness of a cucumber!

Lady M. (*smiling*) My dear Sir Martin, could I prevent the man from falling in love with me?

Emily. (*sharply*) Of course you could.

Sir M. Of course you could.

Emily. In your place I should have—I repeat, I should have——

Sir M. So should I. (*sits.*)

Lady M. (*smiling*) I did better than that, I reminded his lordship that I was the wife of a man I loved and honoured, the dearest, kindest, and handsomest husband in the world.

Sir M. You did? Come to my arms, (*embracing* LADY M.) not that I suspected you for a single moment.

Lady M. (*smiling*) Of course not.

Sir M. But now what's to be done with this Don Juan, this perfidious peer, this vicious viscount, this fiendish Fickleton?

Lady M. In the first place I presume we all look upon him as a common enemy.

Emily. (*spitefully*) I hate him.

Sir M. I could kill him, and eat him too, if I hadn't just had my lunch.

Lady M. Then his lordship must have a hint to go—one that he cannot misunderstand.

Sir M. Exactly. I'll give him a hint that there can be no mistake about. I'll kick him out.

Lady M. No, no. Suppose I take the matter in hand.

Sir M. *You* kick him out? My love you couldn't do it.

Lady M. I mean give his lordship to understand that the inmates of Mayduke Hall no longer wish to monopolize his society.

Sir M. Yes, of course; I have it, suppose we entrust the affair to Emily.

Lady M. (*aside*) No, no, that musn't be. (*aloud*) She wouldn't know what to say.

Emily. I beg your pardon, I should look *so* at the man, (*looking fiercely*) and say to the man, begone!

Sir M. (*to* LADY M.) You hear—she'd look so at the man—and say to the man "begone."

Lady M. (*looking off*, L.) Hush, the enemy's in sight.

Sir M. Is he? Then I'll beat a retreat. (*going towards house.*)

Lady M. Afraid?

Sir M. Of him? Not a bit, but I dread the frightful ferocity of my temper, so I'll leave him to you—annihilate him—demolish him—pulverize him—and in the meantime I'll—(*aside*)—I'll go and have a bit more lunch. (**Exit** *into house.*)

Enter LORD FICKELTON, L. U. E., *followed by* LARKINS.—*The* LADIES *retire to* L. 2 E.

Lord F. (*down* R. C.) Clumsy rascal, to allow that letter to fall into Lady Mayduke's hands.

Larkins. My lud, I thought——

Lord F. You'd no business to think, idiot! Begone, dolt!

Larkins. (*aside*) His ludship is hangry. I'd better be hoff.

(**Exit** L. U. E.)

The LADIES *advance*, EMILY C., LADY M., L. C.

Lord F. (*aside, and observing* LADY M. *and* EMILY) The case is clear, that intercepted despatch of mine has damaged me; but pshaw, courage *mon ami.* (*advances*) Lady Mayduke, your most obedient. Miss Hargrave——

Emily. (*turning her back sharply on him*) I could box his ears.

Lord F. (*to* LADY M.) May I inquire if anything has occurred to ruffle the usually placid temper of your ladyship's sister?

Emily. (*turning sharply*) My temper ruffled! You're quite mistaken my lord, I happen to be in a particularly good temper. Ha, ha, ha! (*forcing a laugh, and aside to* LADY M.) Why don't you laugh? (*aloud*) The fact is, my lord, as you entered, we were laughing heartily, I may say immoderately, ha, ha, ha! (*aside to* LADY M.) Laugh. (*aloud*), at a singularly amusing anecdote I was relating to my sister. Ha, ha, ha., (*aside to* LADY M.) you don't half laugh—(*aloud*)—the story runs thus, that a certain gentleman——

Lady M. (*interrupting*) A nobleman.

Emily. True, a nobleman, *not* a gentleman, laid siege at the same time, to the affections of two sisters.

Lady M. *Two* sisters, and at one shot—a perfect cormorant in love. Eh, my lord! Ha, ha, ha!

Emily. A sort of double-barrelled Lothario—eh, my lord? Ha, ha, ha!

Lord F. Yes, yes.

Emily. Well, he had almost succeeded in persuading each of the sisters that she was the idol of his worship, when an accident——

Lady M. An intercepted letter, I think. (*pointedly.*)

Emily. Yes, accidentally delivered to the wrong sister, opened the eyes of both the ladies, to the real state of the case, who, uniting their forces against the common enemy——

Lady M. They so overwhelmed the poor lord with confusion——

Emily. So thoroughly humiliated him with ridicule—

Lady M. That, though he came in like a lion—ha, ha!

Emily. He was only too glad to go out like a lamb— ha, ha! An amusing story, is it not, my lord?

Lord F. (*quietly*) Very, and strange to say, it reminds me of a story somewhat similar, the hero of which is a nobleman also, *and* a gentleman. Shall I proceed?

Emily. (*with indifference*) As you please.

Lady M. (*aside*) Some new plan of attack, I fear.

Lord F. Well, *my* nobleman, like yours, was thrown by chance, into the society of two sisters; but unlike yours, he did not divide his affections, but fixed them exclusively on the younger of the two, (*looking at* EMILY) but unluckily he had the misfortune to captivate the elder. (*with a smile and meaning look at* LADY M.)

Emily. (*suddenly*) Ah!

Lady M. (*confused*) Pshaw!

Lord F. 'Tis a melancholy fact, I assure you; the poor man found himself adored by one, who mistook mere civility for admiration, and common courtesy for affection. (LADY M. *turns aside with vexation.*)

Emily. (*aside, and with an anxious look at* LADY M.) What a strange coincidence; but, no, no, it cannot be, it would be too dreadful, and yet——

Lord F. Well—what he dreaded, came to pass. A letter intended for the object of his devotion was intercepted by her rival——

Emily. (*hurriedly, aside*) Yes, it was so! (*turning an angry look at* LADY M.)

Lord F. Who, determined on wrecking the happiness of the man she had been unable to entrap, did not hesitate to appropriate to herself——

Lady M. (*suddenly*) Enough, enough—I am surprised, Emily, that you can listen to so childish, so absurd a romance without laughing. Ha, ha, ha! (*forcing a laugh.*)

Emily. (*with severity*) What if it be true, Mary?

Lord F. It *is* true, and tragic was it's termination! (*in a tragedy tone*) For this unhappy nobleman, this interesting and much-to-be-commiserated victim of a calumny which robbed him of his only hope of happiness—(*with a tender look at* EMILY.)

Emily. (*anxiously*) Well——

Lord F. (*drawing out his handkerchief*) Destroyed himself! (*burying his face in his handkerchief, and then peeping aside at* EMILY, *who also draws her handkerchief and wipes her eyes*) Thank you, I see you feel for him. (*in a very pathetic tone.*)

Emily. Of course I do, pity for him—anger, indignation towards the cruel, deceitful, wicked sister, who—who—oh, oh. (*runs sobbing into house,* R. U. E.)

Lord F. (*after a short pause, and in a conceited tone to* LADY M.) Does my fair antagonist confess herself vanquished?

Lady M. (*aside*) I have still one weapon left, and only one—ridicule! but how? Ah, yes, yes. (*aloud*) In a few moments, my lord, you will hear from me, if hostilities are to continue or to cease; if the latter, you will I am sure, show yourself a generous conqueror. (*courtseys and* exits *into house,* R. U. E.)

Lord F. I will! By proving to you Lady Mayduke that, though frivolous and vain, I am neither profligate nor heartless, and that, if your sister will accept my hand—ah, she returns.

Re-Enter EMILY *from house,* R. U. E.

You have taken pity on me?

Emily. (R. C.) I am merely an ambassador from my sister, who charged me with this mysterious message—

SIR MARTIN Enters *from house unobserved and listens, his face is much flushed and his wig awry.*

Tell Lord Fickleton that I send him this, (*producing snuff box*) as an acknowledgement of his victory and my defeat. (*presenting box to* LORD F.)

Lord F. The snuff box, I remember, the forfeit agreed upon.

Sir M. (*suddenly coming down between them*) Indeed! bravo my lord! Bravo my lady! Bravo everybody, but I'll have satisfaction. (*aside*) That old ale of mine is uncommonly strong.

Lord F. My dear Sir Martin——

Sir M. Pooh, pooh. (*aside*) That ale has certainly got up into my wig, I mean my head, (*aloud to* LORD F.) Do you know what a humbug is? A man who says he's fond of botany and doesn't know a red cabbage from a daffodowndilly, *he's* a humbug! A man, who calls another man his dear friend, and makes love to that other man's wife, *he's* a humbug. Consequently my lord, you're two humbugs. That snuff box which my wife has just made you a present of——

Lord F. Well, after all, what is there in a snuff box? (*playing with it, opening and shutting the lid.*)

Sir M. What is there—(*taking a large pinch of snuff out of box*) —no matter, as I said before, I'll have satisfaction, so name your weapons, swords, pistols, pitchforks, I don't care; I'll be back directly—you hear? (*sniffing the pinch of snuff violently up his nose, aside*) but I'll have a drop more of that old ale first. (*runs into house,* R. U. E.)

Emily. (*about to follow him*) My dear brother.

Lord F. (*stopping her*) One moment! that letter, as you must feel assured, was intended for you—can you doubt the sincerity of sentiments——

Emily. Which you have already professed for so many others?

Lord F. Nay, (*aside*) isn't this strange, whenever I have professed an affection which I did not feel, I have invariably been believed; but now that I really and truly love—(*mechanically taking a pinch of snuff, then suddenly advancing to* EMILY)—Miss Hargrave—Emily, hear me, (*kneeling*) while on my knees I swear. Atchi! (*sneezing.*)

Emily. Oh, rise my lord.

Lord F. Not till you pronounce my—atchi—I repeat lovely Emily, not till you pro—nounce—my—atchi—my doom—atchi! (*each sneeze more violent than its predecessor.*)

Emily. If I was certain of your sincerity.

Lord F. Can you doubt it: behold me here—atchi—a suppliant at your—atchi—at your feet—atchi. (*aside*) That confounded snuff.

Emily. (*suppressing her laughter*) What a bad cold you seem to have got.

Lord F. Yes; but what is a cold in the—atchi—in the head, compared to the—atchi—to the fire in my heart—atchi—(*aside*)—I shall sneeze my head off presently.

Emily. (*bursting into an uncontrollable fit of laughter*) Ha, ha, ha, ha! I can't help it, ha, ha, it's so absurd—ha, ha—so excessively ridiculous, ha, ha—don't attempt to make love till your sneezing fit is over.

Lord F. (*aside*) I think I've done now; yes, it's all over! (*aloud*) Once more lovely and—atchi—I repeat—atchi! (*here another very loud "Atchi" is heard outside, and* SIR MARTIN *comes on from house, with a large pistol in each hand and a cavalry sword under each arm,* LADY M. *following.*)

Sir M. (*confronting* LORD F. *and looking fiercely at him*) Now my lord! Atchi!

Lord F. My good Sir Martin, if you'll only—atchi!

Sir M. Pooh, here are swords—atchi—and pistols; take your—atchi—your choice—atchi! (*during this* LADY M. *appears to be explaining matters to* EMILY, *and they both join in hearty laughter at* SIR M. *and* LORD FICKLETON.)

Emily. Ha, ha! Why, sister, what can be the matter with both of the poor gentlemen? Ha, ha, ha!

Sir M. That's what I want—atchi—to know—atchi!

Lord F. So—so—do I—atchi!

Sir M. (R.) It's so infernally absurd to—atchi!

Lord F. To go on sneezing like this—atchi! (*crosses into* L *corner.*)

Lady M. Ha, ha! You've only taken a pinch of your own sneezing powder, my dear. (*to* SIR MARTIN.)

Sir M. Eh! my siflox nasum—atchi—pungens—atchi!

Lady M. (R. C.) Yes, placed by me in his lordship's snuff box in order that he might perfect himself in the part originally intended for him in the Barber of Seville—that of (*imitating* LORD FICKLETON'S *manner*) one of the servants—I forget his name—the fellow who is always sneezing—atchi! ha, ha!

Lord F. (*to* LADY MAYDUKE) It is now *your* turn to show yourself a generous conquerer. I love—yes, truly, sincerely, love your sister.

Sir M. (*suddenly*) Then it *is* Emily after all. (*dropping the swords and pistols*) My lord, I do believe you're a good hearted fellow after all, though you don't understand botany.

Lord F. I beg your pardon—see this nosegay. (*taking small nosegay out of his coat*) Here is a white rose—the emblem of love, a lily of the valley, the emblem of sincerity—your forgiveness, (*to* LADY MAYDUKE) and your sister's hand will add to the heart's ease. (*during the above he has managed to sprinkle some snuff out of the box on the nosegay, which he presents to* LADY MAYDUKE.)

Lady M. (*smelling nosegay*) Very sweet indeed. (*passing it to* EMILY.)

Emily. (*smelling it*) Very.

Sir M. (*smelling it, as* LADY MAYDUKE *holds it to him*) Very.

Lord F. (*to* LADY MAYDUKE) Your answer to my suit?

Lady M. Well—(*joining their hands—going between them*) Atchi!

Emily. (*turning away her head, and holding out her hand to* LORD FICKLETON) Atchi!

Sir M. (*goes between* LORD FICKLETON *and* EMILY, *about to bless them*) Atchi!

Omnes. (*after a short pause, then at the same time and very loud*) Atchi!

LORD F.	LADY M.	SIR M.	EMILY.
R.	R. C.	L. C.	L.

CURTAIN.

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ACT IV.—The lonely house.—Tom and St. Clare.—Topsy's keepsake.—Deacon Perry and Aunt Ophelia.—Cute on deck.—A distant relative.—The hungry visitor.—Chuck full of emptiness."—Cute and the Deacon.—A row.—A fight.—Topsy to the rescue.—St. Clare wounded.— Death of St. Clare.—"Eva—Eva—I am coming"

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Act II. The Separation.—The Maitland homestead.—Anastasia's doubts.—A warm welcome and its icy reception.—Forebodings and doubts.—Father and son.—Searching questions.—A domestic storm and a parent's command.—A foiled villain's wrath.—Enlisting for the war.—The collapse of the cowards.—"It 's no use, 'Dolphy, the jig 's up!"—Hilda's sympathy and Adrienne's silent despair.—The result of impulse.—The father pleads for his son.—Anastasia and Dollerclutch.—Coriolanus comes to grief.—Good and bad news.—Husband and wife.—Reginald demands an explanation.—A hand without a heart.—The separation.—A new recruit.—Too late; the roll is signed.—Tableau.

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Act IV. The Reconciliation and Sequel.—At Reginald's home.—News from the army.—"Grant is not the man to acknowledge defeat!"—Adrienne and Hilda.—False pride is broken.—The reconciliation.—"Will Reginald forgive me?"—Dollerclutch brings joy to Hilda's heart.—"You are the daughter of Morris Maitland!"—The stolen documents and the snake in the grass.—"Hang me if I don't see this thing through!"—A letter to the absent one.—Face to face.—The barrier of pride swept down.—"Reginald, I love you; come back!"—The happy reunion.—An ominous cloud.—"I have deserted my post; the penalty is death. I must return ere my absence is discovered!"—The wolf in the sheepfold.—A wily tempter foiled.—A villain's rage.—"Those words have sealed your doom!"—The murder and the escape.—Dollerclutch arrives too late.—The pursuit.

Act V. Divine Impulse.—In camp.—Maitland on duty.—The charge of desertion and the examination.—"I knew not what I did!"—The colonel's lenity.—Disgrace.—News of Adrienne's murder is brought to camp.—Circumstantial evidence fastens the murder upon Reginald.—The court-martial.—Convicted and sentenced to be shot.—Preparations for the execution.—"God knows I am innocent!"—Dollerclutch arrives in the nick of time.—"If you shoot that man you commit murder!"—The beginning of the end.—"Adrienne lives!"—A villain's terror.—Adrienne appears on the scene.—"There is the attempted assassin!"—Divine impulse.—The reward of innocence and the punishment of villainy.—Good news.—"Hurrah, the war is over; Lee has surrendered to Grant!"—The happy *denouement* and *finale.*

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